

## BOOK NOTICE

DAVID J. WISHART. 2004. **Encyclopedia of the Great Plains.** (ISBN 0-8032-4787-7, hbk.). The University of Nebraska Press, P.O. Box 84555, Lincoln, NE 68501-4555, U.S.A. (Orders: 402-472-3584, Fax: 402-472-6214, www.unp.unl.edu) \$75.00, 919 pp., b/w photos, 8 1/2" x 11".

*Publisher Comments:* "The Great Plains is a vast expanse of grasslands stretching from the Rocky Mountains to the Missouri River and from the Rio Grande to the coniferous forests of Canada—an area more than eighteen hundred miles from north to south and more than five hundred miles from east to west. The Great Plains region includes all or parts of Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. The region, once labeled "the Great American Desert," is now more often called the "heartland," or, sometimes, "the breadbasket of the world." Its immense distances, flowing grasslands, sparse population, enveloping horizons, and dominating sky convey a sense of expansiveness, even emptiness or loneliness, a reaction to too much space and one's own meager presence in it."

"With 1,316 entries contributed by more than one thousand scholars, this groundbreaking reference work captures what is vital and interesting about the Great Plains—from its temperamental climate to its images and icons, its historical character, its folklore, and its politics. Thoroughly illustrated, annotated, indexed, this remarkable compendium of information and analysis will prove the definitive and indispensable resource on the Great Plains for many years to come."

What an impressive book this is. The 27 chapters range from African Americans to Water with each chapter being introduced with a major essay or synthesis of the topic. I explored the index to see what was listed under "Cotton." There is a nice summary of Cotton (*Gossypium hirsutum*) and an impressive b/w photo of a Cotton field in West Texas. I looked up to see what information was available on the flora and there is a relatively short entry, yet a nice summary, provided under the Chapter, *Physical Environment*. "More than 2900 species of vascular plants from some 730 genera in 159 families grow in the Great Plains." The author of this entry cites none other than the *Flora of the Great Plains* (1986).—Barney Lipscomb, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060, U.S.A.